



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Mr Chris Reed
President
Bowen Association of Australia
PO Box 744
HAMILTON CENTRAL QLD 4007

Dear Mr Reed

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS – REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT REBATE ON PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR
NATURAL THERAPIES**

As announced in the 2012-13 Budget, the Australian Government commissioned a review of the Australian Government Rebate on private health insurance (the rebate) for natural therapies (the review).

I am writing to invite your organisation to provide a submission presenting any evidence of clinical efficacy, cost effectiveness and safety and quality relating to natural therapies in scope for the review. A list of the proposed natural therapies in scope for the review is **attached**.

The review, which I will oversee, will identify which natural therapy services are underpinned by an evidence base and can continue to be subsidised by the rebate. The types of services that can be directly subsidised under Medicare and health professionals regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme will not be affected by the proposal. These include acupuncture, audiology, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, diabetes education, dietetics, exercise physiology, occupational therapy, osteopathy, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology services provided by Aboriginal health workers, speech pathology, medical, nursing including mental health and midwifery services, and optical.

Please note that any evidence provided in submissions will be assessed by the Department of Health and Ageing in the context of the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *Additional Levels of Evidence and Grades for Recommendations for Developers of Guidelines* (NHMRC evidence guidelines). The NHMRC evidence guidelines are available on the NHMRC website <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au>.

The NHMRC will also conduct a comprehensive literature review on natural therapies, as well as assess evidence provided by stakeholders. The NHMRC will provide its findings on the evidence available to the Natural Therapy Review Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee).

The Advisory Committee will be chaired by me and include representatives from the natural therapy industry, private health insurers, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registered professionals, consumers and clinical experts. The Advisory Committee will provide advice to the Australian Government about the natural therapies that have been found by the NHMRC to have an evidence base supporting clinical efficacy, cost effectiveness and safety and quality, and can continue to be subsidised by the rebate.

Changes resulting from the review are expected to be implemented on 1 January 2014.

Instructions for submissions

Submissions to the review should present evidence supporting the clinical efficacy, cost effectiveness and safety and quality relating to natural therapies in scope for the review. Information provided in submissions is intended to supplement the literature review that will be undertaken by the NHRMC.

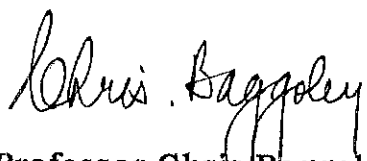
Submissions should be emailed to the Private Health Insurance Branch, Medical Benefits Division of the Department at privatehealth@health.gov.au **by COB, Friday 21 December 2012**, with two hard copies to be followed by mail addressed to:

The Natural Therapy Review
Department of Health and Ageing
Private Health Insurance Branch
MDP 853
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Note that submissions and/or comments received from stakeholders may be made public by the Department or they may be accessed by a third party through a Freedom of Information request.

For further information, please contact Doug Fawns, Assistant Secretary, Private Health Insurance Branch on (02) 6289 9490.

Yours sincerely



Professor Chris Baggoley

BVSc (Hons), BM BS, BSocAdmin, FACEM

20 November 2012

Review of the Australian Government Rebate on Private Health Insurance for Natural Therapies

Proposed natural therapies in scope for review*

- Alexander Technique
- Aromatherapy
- Ayurvedic
- Biochemistry
- Bowen Therapy
- Buteyko
- Deep Tissue Massage
- Feldenkrais
- Herbalist
- Hypnotherapy
- Iridology
- Kinesiology
- Lymphatic Drainage
- Massage therapy
- Myofascial Release
- Myotherapy
- Naturopathy
- Nutrition
- Pilates
- Psychotherapy
- Reflexology
- Remedial Massage
- Rolfing
- Shiatsu
- Sports Therapy Massage
- Swedish Massage
- Tai Chi
- Therapeutic Massage
- Western Herbalism
- Yoga
- Homeopathy (informed by the findings of the NHMRC Homeopathy Working Committee)

* This list may be subject to change. The Department will be seeking confirmation from private health insurers about the natural therapies they cover.